

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-12, and 14-25 are pending. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6-12, 14, and 15 have been allowed, claims 16, 20, and 21 have been amended, and claims 2, 5, and 13 have been canceled. Applicants submit that none of the amendments presented in this paper raise new issues requiring further searching or consideration by the Examiner.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested for the following reasons.

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner indicated claims 1 and 9 were considered allowable because they clarify the type of resource utilization information (namely, packet holding times) reported, and in particular that “each of the plurality of packet processors reports the respective accumulated packet holding time periodically based on a period set by the user.” The rejections of claims 16, 20, and 21 were maintained for failing to recite these features.

In this Reply, claim 16 has been amended to recite that the call assignment circuit assigns the resource by “receiving an accumulated packet holding time from each of the packet processing circuits; determining the resource utilization of each of the packet processing circuits based on a corresponding one of the accumulated packet holding times; and comparing the resource utilization of the packet processing circuits, wherein each of the plurality of packet processing circuits reports a corresponding one of the accumulated packet holding times periodically based on a period set by a user.” (See, for example, pages 9-12 for support.)

Claim 20 has been amended to recite that “each of the plurality of packet processing circuits reports an accumulated packet holding time to the call assignment circuit periodically based on a period set by a user,” and that the call assignment circuit assigns the resource from the particular packet processing circuit “based on the reported accumulated packet holding times from the packet processing circuits.” (See, for example, pages 9-12 for support.)

Claim 21 has been amended to recite that said determining includes “receiving an accumulated packet holding time from each of the packet processing functions, the processing utilization of resources of the packet processing functions being determined based on corresponding ones of the accumulated packet holding times,” and that said selecting includes “comparing the processing utilization of resources of the packet processing functions, wherein each of the plurality of packet processing functions reports a corresponding one of the accumulated packet holding times periodically based on a period set by a user.” (See, for example, pages 9-12 for support.)

Claims 16, 20, and 21 have therefore been amended to recite features similar to those which patentably distinguish claims 1 and 9 from the cited references. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 16, 20, and 21 are allowable in their amended form along with their dependent claims. Withdrawal of the rejections in the Final Office Action is therefore respectfully requested.

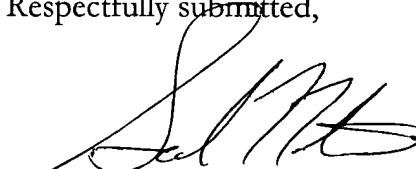
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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with this application to Deposit Account No. 16-0607 and credit any excess fees to the same Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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